Wednesday
January 17, 2018

TODAY **37 / 25** Mostly sunny
THURSDAY **43 / 36** Partly sunny
FRIDAY **57 / 49** Isolated showers possible

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SPORTS, C1

GOLDEN: TEAM MUST BUILD ON NEAR-WIN OVER UCONN



METRO & STATE, B1

WHY AREN'T AUSTIN'S TRAFFIC SIGNALS TIMED BETTER?



AUSTIN360, D1

VEGAN TACOS

Stick to your resolutions with out-of-this-world tacos

CONTINUING COVERAGE PROPERTY TAX REFORM

Abbott's property tax proposal caps increases at 2.5%

Critics: Governor should be seeking to boost state funds for public schools.

By Jonathan Tilove
jtilove@statesman.com

Gov. Greg Abbott unveiled a property tax reform plan Tuesday that would cap revenue increases for local taxing entities at 2.5 percent a year. It promises to be the centerpiece of his re-election campaign and, if he wins a second term, his top priority in the next session of the Legislature.

The plan also would prohibit the Legislature from imposing unfunded mandates on the local jurisdictions that would be bound by the cap.

"Enough is enough," said Abbott, who traveled Tuesday to Houston to announce his proposal.

"Under the plan I am announcing today, Texas will take action to limit property tax growth, secure private property rights and ensure that Texas remains the most exceptional state in the nation," Abbott said.

The Abbott plan is more sweeping than the property tax rollback proposals that foundered during last summer's special legislative session amid disagreements among House and Senate Republicans. The governor's initiative takes aim at property tax increases that have outstripped growth in household income and, in his view, accelerated gentrification, compromised Texas' reputation as a low-tax state and fed a burgeoning public sector.

The governor was flanked at his Houston news conference

Abbott continued on **A5**



Gov. Greg Abbott (from left) makes a point as House Ways and Means Chairman Dennis Bonnen, R-Angleton, and David Garcia, a Harris County homeowner, listen at a news conference Tuesday in Houston to announce the governor's proposal. JON SHAPLEY / HOUSTON CHRONICLE

ELECTIONS IN-DEPTH GUBERNATORIAL RACE

White tops Valdez in early fundraising

But both lag far behind Greg Abbott in money for governor's race.

By Jonathan Tilove
jtilove@statesman.com



Valdez



White

Houston businessman Andrew White, making his first run for elective office, far outpaced former Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez in the first few weeks of fundraising in their late-starting campaigns to become the Democratic nominee to challenge Gov. Greg Abbott, who has set a Texas fundraising record in his bid for a second term.

White reported raising $219,000 in three weeks of campaigning, including loaning his campaign $40,000, according to his fundraising report for the last half of 2017, which was due Tuesday to the Texas Ethics Commission. White had $104,000 in cash on hand at the end of the year.

It was not a sensational start, but it was better than Valdez, who raised $46,000 in the waning days of 2017, and had $40,000 in cash on hand at year's end. That means that Abbott, with $43.3 million in his campaign coffers, has more than 1,000 times as much money as Valdez to spend.

A somewhat similar financial disequilibrium was evident in the Republican campaign for lieutenant governor.

Elections continued on **A6**

ALSO INSIDE
» Sheryl Cole raises more than $91,000, emerges as top threat to Rep. Dawnna Dukes, **A6**
» **Ken Herman:** Abbott emails tout cash haul, cry poverty, **B1**

CENTRAL TEXAS WEATHER

AUSTIN 'SNOW DAY' MOSTLY ABOUT ICE

Freezing rain, sleet and some snow fall amid bitter cold; schools and offices close; roads see multiple crashes.



Jack Bohuslav, 15, sleds down an icy hill Tuesday at Circle C Ranch Metropolitan Park. Freezing rain, sleet and some light snow fell on the area as a winter storm rolled in. JAY JANNER / AMERICAN-STATESMAN

IMPACTS FROM THE STORM
The airport: More than 70 flights in and out of Austin were canceled Tuesday, with 50 or so others delayed.
The roads: Despite pre-treating bridges and flyovers with brine, highway officials had to temporarily close some spots Tuesday morning for follow-up de-icing. The closures included U.S. 183 flyovers at MoPac Boulevard (Loop 1) and Interstate 35, as well as I-35's upper deck. Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services responded to 136 road incidents from midnight to 9 a.m. Tuesday, including 13 weather-related crashes.
Closures: Public schools were closed Tuesday throughout Central Texas, as were colleges and universities, along with most city, county and state government offices.

THE FORECAST
The freezing rain and flecks of snow have moved on, but the chill remains. Austin temperatures were expected to dip to around 20 degrees overnight, and won't top freezing until about noon Wednesday, with a high of 42 later in the day. Expect a gradual warm-up to about 70 Saturday and Sunday.

By Ben Wear
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On an odd and frigid Tuesday in Central Texas, with widespread school and business closures on a "snow day" with some ice but little snow in much of Austin, some people saw a delicious opportunity.

"We have about 30 people in line right now," Benjamin Jacob, general manager of Franklin Barbecue, said about 10 a.m., an hour or so before the brisket was scheduled to begin hitting plates. "And we're getting calls from people intending to come in."

On a normal day, Jacob said, the line at that time would have 75 to 100 people. Given the upper-20s chill, and the relatively short queue, Franklin employees were letting the standees wait inside. Word got out, however, and by noon about 80 meat-lovers were on hand.

"When school shuts down, we tend to get a lot of people in here," Jacob said. "We're still rocking and rolling."

Central Texas in general, however, was sliding and idling Tuesday. Law enforcement was encouraging that second activity.

"We are seeing more road closures and crashes everywhere," Austin interim Police Chief Brian Manley tweeted about 9:45 a.m. as freezing rain, sleet and some light snow made a midmorning return to the area. "Stay off the roads unless it's an absolute emergency. The ice patches will sneak up on you."

The north half of the Austin metro area, National Weather Service meteorologist Brett Williams said, saw perhaps two-hundredths of an inch of freezing rain and sleet Monday night through

Weather continued on **A8**

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ALSO INSIDE
» Technology lets work go on despite wintry weather, **A8**
» Most Central Texas schools will be open Wednesday, **A10**
» Snowy, icy conditions lead to trouble across Texas, **A10**



A pickup lies on its cab Tuesday after crashing through a fence and falling 30 feet from a Slaughter Lane overpass east of Manchaca Road. One man died; another was critically hurt. RALPH BARRERA /AMERICAN-STATESMAN



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NATION & WORLD, A7
Shutdown looming over immigration issue
Key Democrat refuses to guarantee votes needed to keep the federal government open without a deal on DACA.

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